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NSC BRIEFING

17 June 1954

INDOCHINA

I. Military picture delta little changed,  
but Viet Minh readiness believed complete.

A. National Intelligence Estimate,  
for 30 days ending 15 July,  
concludes Viet Minh will increase  
delta operations, possibly com-  
mitting battle corps, to push  
back French, demoralize Viet-  
namese and cut LOC Hanoi-Haiphong.

B. French will be able hold key  
strong points, keep LOC open  
part-time. *HANOI stocks RICE*  
*& COAL = 20 DAYS requirements.*

C. In face major attack, however,  
French might evacuate Hanoi, fall  
back to Haiphong, which could  
almost certainly hold.

NSA review completed

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D. Vietnamese political situation

will probably continue deteriorate.

II. Week's most interesting evidence

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readiness-possibly indicative plans

attack

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E. French report two Viet Minh intelligence companies operating northeast, northwest of Hanoi; could be preliminary to operations.

F. French note new grouping enemy units south Hanoi-Haiphong LOC; pattern indicates early action against these routes.

III. French apprehensive of attack but claim no conclusive evidence enemy intent. Says enemy stockpiles rear areas sufficient for initial stages attack.

A. Nearness China border would permit resupply sustain large-scale offensive.

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- [REDACTED]
- B. French expect early increase  
Chinese aid (now close 3,000  
tons per month).

IV. Vietnamese morale, important determinant  
enemy course of action, very low.

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- A. [REDACTED] desertions  
Vietnamese army units, militia  
in Delta highest yet.
1. Fear for safety of families  
in areas where Viet Minh  
consolidating control a  
major cause desertions.
- B. Prospects early Viet Minh military  
or diplomatic victory lessening  
weak support Vietnamese for  
government, army.
- C. Only three percent delta  
villages loyal to French.

CONTINUES

D. Other instances sagging morale:  
mutiny Vietnamese army mobile  
group stationed in Central  
Vietnam; anti-conscription  
rioting south Saigon; rioting  
at Vietnamese naval academy.

V. Meanwhile, Governor Tri says Ely  
evasive on French plans for delta.

A. Tri fears evacuation Hanoi,  
possible plans abandon people  
southern delta.

B. Ely's evasiveness typical uneasy  
French-Vietnamese relationship.

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